

BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-6306
CLAUDIO ESKENAZI

DECEMBER 8, 1978

THIS WEEK NO. 49

ANNCR:

"THIS WEEK."

FROM THE VOICE OF AMERICA, THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK GONE BY...A LOOK AT SOME OF THE EVENTS, A CROSS-SECTION OF THE IDEAS, AND THE VOICES OF SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO MADE NEWS DURING THE LAST SEVEN DAYS. YOUR NARRATOR IS -----.

NARR:

IRAN CONTINUED IN TURMOIL THIS WEEK IN THE AFTERMATH OF LAST MONTH'S BLOODY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SHAH AND HIS OPPONENTS. IN ANOTHER TURN OF EVENTS AGAINST THE HARD-PRESSED IRANIAN GOVERNMENT, OIL FIELD WORKERS ANSWERED A CALL FROM EXILED RELIGIOUS LEADER AYATOLLAH KHOMEINY AND WALKED OFF THEIR JOBS. WITHIN A FEW DAYS THE STRIKE SPREAD TO NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION.

LATER IN THE WEEK, KARIM SANJABI, THE LEADER OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL OPPOSITION GROUP IN IRAN -- THE NATIONAL FRONT PARTY -- WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON IN WHAT COULD BE PART OF A PLAN TO INCLUDE HIM IN A FUTURE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IN IRAN. VOA CORRESPONDENT CHARLES WEISS REPORTS FROM TEHERAN:

TAPE: CUT ONE -- WEISS

"IN A CONCILIATORY GESTURE, THE SHAH ORDERED THE RELEASE NOT ONLY OF DOCTOR SANJABI BUT OF 120 OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS, WITH THE PROMISE THAT AN ADDITIONAL 380 SECURITY DETAINEES WILL BE SET FREE SATURDAY. FREEDOM FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS HAS BEEN ONE OF THE DEMANDS FREQUENTLY PUT FORWARD BY THE WORKERS IN THE MANY STRIKES WHICH HAVE PLAGUED IRAN LATELY."

NARR:

AFTER HIS RELEASE, DOCTOR SANJABI SAID HE CANNOT JOIN THE IRANIAN CABINET UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. IT APPEARS THAT SANJABI'S NATIONAL FRONT DOES NOT NECESSARILY SUBSCRIBE TO THE AYATOLLAH KHOMEINY'S STAND THAT THE PAHLEVI DYNASTY HAS TO GO.

THE NATIONAL FRONT APPEARS TO BELIEVE THE PRESENT NATURE OF THE MONARCH IS ILLEGAL AND HAS TO BE CHANGED TO REFLECT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE. THIS COULD BE DONE, SAYS THE FRONT, THROUGH A REFERENDUM OR SOME KIND OF FREE ELECTION. IF THE PEOPLE VOTE TO RETAIN THE SHAH, THE FRONT SAYS IT WILL ACCEPT THAT DECISION, ALTHOUGH THE FRONT DOUBTS THAT THE VOTERS WOULD SUPPORT THE MONARCH.

MEANWHILE A MASS DEMONSTRATION HAS BEEN CALLED FOR SUNDAY IN TEHERAN. ITS ORGANIZERS HOPE THAT AS MANY AS ONE MILLION PEOPLE WILL TAKE PART. IF THAT HAPPENS, IT'S NOT AT ALL CLEAR WHETHER THE ARMY WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE CROWDS IN THE PRESENT SUPER-CHARGED SITUATION. ALTHOUGH THE MARCH IS BILLED AS A COMMEMORATION OF THE MARTYRDOM OF THE FOUNDER OF THE SHI'ITE MOSLEM SECT TO WHICH MOST OF IRAN'S POPULATION BELONGS, IT COULD DEVELOP INTO A CRUCIAL SHOWDOWN BETWEEN THE SHAH AND HIS OPPONENTS.

U.S. CONCERN OVER THE SITUATION IN IRAN WAS REFLECTED IN COMMENTS BY PRESIDENT CARTER LATER IN THE WEEK. MISTER CARTER SAID IRAN'S STABILITY IS VALUABLE IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION AND THE MEDITERRANEAN AND IS IMPORTANT TO WORLD PEACE. THE PRESIDENT LINKED THAT STABILITY TO THE SHAH'S LEADERSHIP EMPHASIZING THAT THE UNITED STATES WANTS AN ABSENCE OF VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED IN IRAN, MISTER CARTER ADDED THAT HE PREFERENCES THAT THE SHAH MAINTAIN A MAJOR ROLE IN HE GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT THIS DECISION WAS UP TO THE IRANIAN PEOPLE TO MAKE.

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IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS THIS WEEK, PRESIDENT CARTER STRONGLY REAFFIRMED HIS ADMINISTRATION'S SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD IN A CEREMONY OBSERVING THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF

THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. MISTER CARTER SAID THE PURSUIT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOT A PERIPHERAL OR DECORATIVE ASPECT OF U.S. POLICY, BUT IS IN FACT THE VERY SOUL OF THE U.S. APPROACH TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE PRESIDENT ADDED THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS MESSAGE WILL BE CARRIED BY ALL U.S. REPRESENTATIVES ABROAD. AND HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE RIGHTS ISSUE WILL PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN U.S. FOREIGN-AID AND POLITICAL DECISIONS:

TAPE: CUT TWO -- CARTER

"IN DISTRIBUTING THE SCARCE RESOURCES OF OUR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, WE WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT OUR DEEPEST AFFINITIES ARE WITH NATIONS WHICH COMMIT THEMSELVES TO A DEMOCRATIC PATH TO DEVELOPMENT. TOWARD REGIMES WHICH PERSIST IN WHOLESALE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, WE WILL NOT HESITATE TO CONVEY OUR OUTRAGE, NOR WILL WE PRETEND THAT OUR RELATIONS ARE UNAFFECTED."

NARR:

MISTER CARTER SAID THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HIS HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN IS AN ESTABLISHED FACT -- HAVING CONTRIBUTED TO THE RELEASE OF HUNDREDS AND EVEN THOUSANDS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND IMPROVED CONDITIONS IN MANY COUNTRIES. AND HE SAID THE VICTIMS OF RIGHTS ABUSES PROVIDE THE BEST TESTIMONY OF THE EFFORT'S IMPACT.

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VOTING ENDED THIS WEEK IN NAMIBIA'S FIVE-DAY LONG INTERNAL ELECTIONS FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. THE VOTING WAS SPONSORED BY SOUTH AFRICA -- THE TERRITORY'S GOVERNING POWER -- BUT HAS MET WORLDWIDE REJECTION. TWO NAMIBIAN NATIONALIST PARTIES BOYCOTTED THE ELECTION. THE RESULTS WILL NOT BE KNOWN UNTIL NEXT WEEK. BUT THE OUTCOME SEEMS ASSURED, SINCE ONLY ONE MAJOR POLITICAL GROUP, THE PRO-SOUTH AFRICAN TURNHALLE ALLIANCE, IS AMONG THE FIVE PARTIES ON THE BALLOT.

LATER IN THE WEEK SOUTH AFRICA INFORMED U.S. SECRETARY-GENERAL KURT WALDHEIM THAT IT WILL RETAIN AUTHORITY IN NAMIBIA FOLLOWING THE INTERNAL ELECTIONS. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ALSO SAID SOUTH AFRICA HAD INFORMED HIM OF ITS WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE U.N. PLAN FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF NAMIBIA AND TO CONTINUE CONSULTATIONS ON OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS. EARLIER THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL CONDEMNED THE INTERNAL ELECTIONS AND CALLED ON SOUTH AFRICA TO CANCEL THEM. DESPITE SOUTH AFRICA'S REFUSAL TO DO THAT, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT PRETORIA'S STATED INTENTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF NAMIBIA HAVE SO FAR STALLED ANY U.S. SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION ON SANCTIONS.

(OPT) LATER IN THE WEEK, SOME AFRICAN DELEGATIONS AT THE U.N. WERE ONCE AGAIN CALLING ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO IMPOSE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. VOA CORRESPONDENT GORDON GAIPPE REPORTS FROM THE U.N.:

TAPE: CUT THREE -- GAIPPE

"THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE U.N., PASCAL GAYAMA OF THE CONGO, TOLD THE SECURITY COUNCIL THAT DESPITE STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY, SOUTH AFRICA WANTS TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OF NAMIBIA IN PERPETUITY. AND AMBASSADOR GAYAMA CRITICIZED THE FIVE WESTERN COUNTRIES ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL THAT DREW UP THE U.N. PLAN FOR NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE. HE SAID THAT FOR SOME OBSCURE REASON THE FIVE HAVE PLACED THEMSELVES IN THE POSITION OF SUPPLICANTS OR PETITIONERS TO SOUTH AFRICA." (END OPT)

NARR:

IN OTHER AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS, U.S. SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN WAS IN RHODESIA ON A FACT-FINDING MISSION. HE HELD TALKS WITH THE FOUR PRINCIPAL MEMBERS OF RHODESIA'S BIRACIAL INTERIM GOVERNMENT. SUMMING UP THE RESULTS OF HIS MISSION, SENATOR MCGOVERN SAID HE SEES NO EVIDENCE OF ANY BREAKTHROUGH THAT WOULD BRING THE GUERRILLA FORCES INTO AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE OR INTO RHODESIA'S INTERNAL PROCESS. HE PREDICTED MORE WAR, AND MORE BLOODSHED.

SENATOR MCGOVERN ALSO REPORTED THAT RHODESIAN PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH INSISTS HE IS COMMITTED TO ATTENDING AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. BUT THE SENATOR SAID HE HEARD NO NEW INITIATIVES WHICH COULD RESULT IN BRINGING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT LEADERS TO SUCH A CONFERENCE:

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- MCGOVERN

"I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT I'M MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN WHEN I CAME. I THINK THAT THE MILITARY STRUGGLE HAS REACHED A MOMENTUM NOW WHERE IT IS GOING TO BE VERY DIFFICULT TO STOP. AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS IN THE MINDS OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT LEADERS. BUT I THINK IT'S GOING TO BE MUCH HARDER NOW TO BRING THEM INTO A NEGOTIATING PROCESS THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, BEFORE THEY HAD AS MUCH STRENGTH IN THE FIELD AS THEY APPEAR TO HAVE NOW."

NARR:

IN MIDEAST DEVELOPMENTS THIS WEEK, THE UNITED STATES CONTINUED TO PRESS EGYPT AND ISRAEL FOR AGREEMENT ON A PEACE TREATY. THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAID THE UNITED STATES CONSIDERS IT ESSENTIAL THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON A PEACE TREATY BE RESUMED. WITH THIS IN MIND, SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE WAS HEADING FOR EGYPT AND ISRAEL FOR TALKS ON WAYS TO RESUME THE NEGOTIATIONS. WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS SEE THE VANCE MISSION AS THE LOGICAL NEXT STEP ALONG THE ROAD. AND WHILE THEY SAID IT IS NOT A RESCUE MISSION TO SAVE THE NEGOTIATIONS, THEY ALSO CAUTIONED AGAINST EXCESSIVE OPTIMISM AND VIEWING IT AS A BREAKTHROUGH. VOA CORRESPONDENT PHILOMENA JUREY HAS DETAILS:

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- JUREY

"MISTER VANCE'S TALKS WITH EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT AND ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER MENACHEM BEGIN WILL COME JUST A WEEK BEFORE THE DECEMBER 17 TARGET DATE WHICH WAS SET AT CAMP DAVID FOR REACHING AN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE TREATY. THE WASHINGTON PEACE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN STALLED BY DIFFERENCES OVER THE APPROACH TO PALESTINIAN AUTONOMY IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE TREATY TO OTHER TREATIES. HOW TO RESOLVE THESE DIFFERENCES WILL BE DISCUSSED DURING THE VANCE MISSION."

NARR:

LATER IN THE WEEK, PRESIDENT CARTER SAID FAILURE TO CONCLUDE A TREATY BY DECEMBER 17TH WOULD BE A VERY SERIOUS MATTER WHICH WOULD HAVE FAR-REACHING EFFECTS ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE ATTACHES MORE IMPORTANCE TO MEETING THE DEADLINE THAN DO MESSRS. BEGIN AND SADAT. IT IS FOR THAT REASON HE SAID, THAT SECRETARY VANCE WAS SENT TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

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AT A COMMON MARKET SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS THIS WEEK, EUROPEAN LEADERS WORKED OUT A NEW EUROPEAN MONETARY SYSTEM. BUT, SO FAR, THE THREE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WITH THE POOREST ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE HAVE NOT AGREED TO BE FULL PARTICIPANTS. THE IDEA BEHIND THE SYSTEM IS TO MAKE EUROPE AN AREA OF GREATER MONETARY STABILITY BY LIMITING THE FLUCTUATIONS AGAINST EACH OTHER OF KEY EUROPEAN CURRENCIES.

THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF SPECIAL CREDIT WILL BE PROVIDED TO HELP PARTICIPANTS DEFEND THEIR CURRENCIES ON INTERNATIONAL MONEY MARKETS. THE LEADERS HOPE THIS NEW STABILITY WILL BRING NEW ECONOMIC GROWTH AND HELP REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT.

(OPT) VOA CORRESPONDENT EDIE SMITH APPLE REPORTS FROM BRUSSELS:

TAPE: CUT SIX -- APPLE

"THE BRITISH HAVE LONG EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT THE WISDOM OF AGREEING TO TIE THE BRITISH POUND TO THE WEST GERMAN MARK AT THIS TIME. AT A BREAK IN THE MEETING BRITISH PRIME MINISTER JAMES CALLAGHAN CONFIRMED HE WILL NOT RECOMMEND THAT BRITAIN JOIN. BUT HE SAID THE BRITISH WILL PARTICPATE IN THE SYSTEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT GUARANTEEING THE EXCHANGE RATE. WHEN THE MEETING BEGAN BOTH IRELAND AND ITALY HAD BEEN EXPECTED TO PARTICPATE. BUT AFTER RECEIVING LESS AID THATN EXPECTED TO BRING THEIR ECONOMIES UP TO THE LEVEL OF STRONGER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, THE LEADERS OF BOTH COUNTRIES SAID THEY WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT FURTHER WITH THEIR GOVERNMENTS."

NARR: (END OPT)

ALSO IN BRUSSELS THIS WEEK, THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE ~~NORTH~~ ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION ENDED THEIR MEETING WITH A WIDE RANGING

COMMUNIQUE CALLING FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND INCREASED COMMITMENT TO THE POLICY OF DETENTE.

THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE JOINT U.S.-SOVIET COMMERCIAL COMMISSION CONCLUDED IN MOSCOW THIS WEEK. THE MAIN U.S. PARTICIPANTS WERE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL AND COMMERCE TREASURY JUANITA KREPS. AFTER TWO DAYS OF TALKS THEY CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT TRADE WITH THE SOVIET UNION COULD BE MUCH GREATER THAN IT IS TODAY.

THIS IS ALSO THE SOVIET VIEW, AND THE PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE WAS TO FIND WAYS TO OVERCOME EXISTING BARRIERS. BOTH SIDES SAID THEY WERE ENCOURAGED BY THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED DURING THE CONFERENCE. BUT BOTH SIDES ALSO CONCEDED THAT PROBLEMS REMAIN. COMMERCE SECRETARY KREPS SAID SHE THOUGHT THERE WERE STEPS THAT COULD BE TAKEN TO ENHANCE TRADE ON BOTH SIDES:

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- KREPS

"IN BROADER CONTEXT, SUCH TRADE POTENTIAL CAN BE REALIZED ONLY IF OUR OVERALL RELATIONS CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AS WE THINK THEY HAVE IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. AFTER FULL AND FRANK DISCUSSIONS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS, I BELIEVE SUCH IMPROVEMENTS WILL CONTINUE--THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO INCREASE THE TOTAL VOLUME OF TWO-WAY TRADE IN THE COMING YEARS."

FINALLY, IN SPAIN THIS WEEK, A MAJORITY OF REGISTERED VOTERS EXPRESSED THEIR OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FOR A NEW DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION IN A NATIONAL REFERENDUM.. STILL THE TURNOUT WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT TO LEADERS OF SEVERAL MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES. ONE OF EVERY THREE SPANISH VOTERS DID NOT TAKE PART IN THE REFERENDUM. BUT 87 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO VOTED SAID YES TO THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND ONLY EIGHT PERCENT SAID NO.

THE CONSTITUTION WILL BE FORMALLY PUT INTO EFFECT IN ABOUT THREE WEEKS.

ANNCR:

AND THOSE ARE SOME OF THE STORIES THAT MADE HEADLINES THIS WEEK. YOUR NARRATOR WAS ----- JOIN US AGAIN NEXT ----- WHEN THE VOICE OF AMERICA TAKES A LOOK AT THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS OF THE WEEK.

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WJL/RD